

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, 19 and 21 are amended. Claims 1-9 are withdrawn from consideration.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the telephone interview conducted March 15, 2004. The substance of the interview is incorporated in the following Remarks, which constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action indication that claims 13, 14 and 18 are allowable and that claims 10, 11, 12, 15, 19, 20 and 21 contain allowable subject matter. (Please note that paragraphs 5 and 7 appear to be in error with respect to claim 19 since claim 18 is allowed). However, for the reason set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are in condition for allowance.

The Office Action indicates that a complete reply to the Final Rejection must include cancellation of non-elected claims 1-9 or other appropriate action. As discussed in the

telephone interview, for the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that rejoinder of claims 1-9 is proper.

The Office Action rejects claims 10-12, 15-17, 19, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, claims 10, 15, 19 and 21 are amended to obviate this grounds of rejection. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 10-12, 15-17, 19, 20 and 21 be withdrawn.

In particular, claims 10, 15, 19 and 21 are amended to recite "generating a ground current that flows in the plasma to the inner wall of the chamber by absorbing charges in the plasma to the inner wall." By this amendment, clear antecedent basis is provided for subsequent occurrences of the term "ground current," as well as clarifying how the ground current is formed. Support for the amended claims can be found in paragraphs [0026] and [0027] on page 6 of the specification, for example.

Claim 21 is further amended to recite "depositing the reaction products on the inner wall of the chamber from the plasma." Applicant submits that the term "reaction products" is a term well known in the art, referring to the product of reactions occurring in plasmas which form compounds which are deposited over surfaces in the vicinity of the plasma. The term "depositing the reaction products" is defined in paragraph [0012] on page 3 and in paragraph [0032] on page 7 of the specification, for example.

The Office Action further asserts that it is confusing how the reaction products are formed since only a single gas is utilized to form the plasma (page 4 of Office Action). However, claim 21 does not recite a single gas, but instead recites "a gas atmosphere within the chamber." Thus, the gas atmosphere may comprise, for example, silane and oxygen gas which produce silicone oxide reaction products.

As agreed to during the telephone interview, Applicant submits that claims 10, 15 and 21 fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Based on the Office

Action indication that claims 10, 15 and 21 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable. Claims 11 and 12 depend from claim 10, claims 16-17 depend from claim 15. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11-12 and 16-17 are also allowable.

The Office Action indicates that claim 19 is "objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim." However, as noted above, claim 19 depends from claim 18, which is indicated in the Office Action to be allowable. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claim 19, along with dependent claim 20, are also allowable.

The Office Action fails to address claim 22. Claim 22 depends from claim 21. Therefore Applicant respectfully submits that claim 22 is allowable.

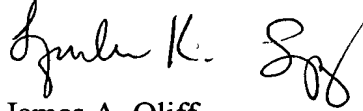
The Office Action requests cancellation of non-elected claims 1-9. However, claim 9 is a linking claim which recites "means for" performing each of the steps recited in claim 10. Therefore, the method of claim 10 must be performed by the apparatus of claim 9. Independent claims 1, 5 and 6 recite additional features which correspond to the "means" elements of claim 9. It is respectfully submitted that the apparatus recited in claims 1, 5 and 6 will necessarily perform the methods recited in claims 10, 13 and 18. Claims 2-4 depend from claim 1 and claims 7-8 depend from claim 6. In order to expedite prosecution, claims 1, 6 and 9 have been amended to include the additional feature of "generating a ground current flowing from the plasma to the inner wall of the chamber by absorbing charges in the plasma to the inner wall," to be consistent with the amendments to claims 10, 15 and 21.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-9 should be rejoined and allowed.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-22 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Jaquelin K. Spong
Registration No. 52,241

JAO:JKS/scg

Date: March 17, 2004

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--